

**U.S.–Panama
Environmental Cooperation Commission
2014–2017 Work Program**

Introduction

The Environmental Cooperation Commission (Commission), established pursuant to the “United States-Panama Environmental Cooperation Agreement” (ECA) has developed the following Work Program through 2017 that identifies specific goals and objectives and areas for cooperation that reflect national priorities for each Government.

Background

The Governments of the United States of America and the Republic of Panama signed an Environmental Cooperation Agreement (ECA) on May 2, 2012. In so doing, the Governments recognized the importance of protecting the environment and of promoting sustainable development in concert with the expansion of bilateral trade and investment associated with the U.S.-Panama Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA).

The ECA, a parallel agreement to the TPA, establishes the means and types of cooperation between the two governments and calls for the Commission to develop a Work Program that reflects each country’s priorities. In the ECA, the Parties agreed to promote the development of opportunities for public participation in the development and implementation of cooperative environmental activities.

The Governments take note of the bilateral and regional cooperation efforts underway in other forums and intend to supplement and expand this work, including by exploring opportunities for collaboration in priority areas with other countries in the region.

The Governments may update or modify the objectives and activities under this work program through future consultations. Implementation of activities will depend on the availability of funds and other resources from the Governments and other sources.

Priority Areas for Cooperation and Related Activities

The Work Program focuses on the priority goals and objectives listed below:

A. Institutional and Policy Strengthening for Effective Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Laws

Objectives: To work together to: (1) ensure that each Governments’ laws and policies provide for and encourage high levels of environmental protection and to continue to improve those laws and

policies, (2) strengthen the Governments' ability to effectively enforce environmental laws and regulations, including those that implement their obligations under Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs); (3) exchange information and experiences on environmental law compliance and adjudication and other approaches to environmental protection and natural resource management, including through market-based mechanisms.

Activities

1. Provide technical capacity building to officials such as prosecutors and district attorneys, investigators, customs inspectors, and judges from regulatory entities in the areas of enforcement and compliance (e.g., inspection, investigation, judicial proceedings, prosecution, and permitting) and adjudication of environmental laws and regulations.
2. Support the Panamanian National Environment Authority (ANAM) in strengthening or revising regulations, policies, and procedures in areas such as environmental impact assessment, strategic environmental assessment, management of waste water, solid waste, chemical products, and other dangerous substances, and air quality monitoring.
3. Exchange information and best practices on implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES), for example, improve the capacity of wildlife rescue centers to shelter, treat, and rehabilitate individual animals to prepare them for return to the wild.
4. Support fisheries enforcement and exchange information on best practices to address illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing.

B. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Management of Protected Areas and Other Ecologically Important Ecosystems

Objectives: To work at the national level to (1) promote and encourage the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity and all of its components, including plants, animals, and habitats; and (2) improve the management of land and marine protected areas and other ecologically important ecosystems.

Activities

1. Exchange best practices in protected area management, rehabilitating reserves/protected areas, managing wildlife, and supporting sustainable tourism.
2. Share experiences in working with communities, including indigenous communities, located in protected areas and buffer zones on management of protected areas, biodiversity conservation, and management of economic benefits from the associated natural resources.

3. Exchange information and best practices on implementation of the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention).
4. Support conservation and management activities to protect endangered sea turtles, such as training on the use of turtle excluder devices (TED). Develop community management strategies in conjunction with coastal communities to reduce turtle egg poaching.

C. Improved Private Sector Environmental Performance

Objectives: To enhance private sector environmental performance through (1) the adoption of sound practices and strategies for cleaner production, (2) voluntary mechanisms, and (3) public-private partnerships, in a manner consistent with maintaining international competitiveness.

Activities

1. Facilitate public-private sector collaboration among Panama and U.S. companies, business associations, and financial institutions to increase the capacity to adopt cleaner, environmentally friendly, and economically-efficient production methods, including market-based mechanisms.
2. Support ANAM in drafting and publishing practical manuals on environmentally friendly production and guides on pollution reduction, recycling, and waste treatment, as well as expanding the scope of action of the Good Environmental Practices Guides for different sectors.

D. Environmental Education, Transparency and Public Participation

Objectives: To strengthen civil society mechanisms for participating in, managing, and monitoring environmental matters and practices, including by (1) promoting informed and timely citizen participation in environmental management decision making and enforcement; (2) enhancing transparency in regulatory and program implementation; and (3) exchanging knowledge and experiences on environmental education strategies and programs, with a focus on primary and community-based education.

Activities

1. Strengthen informed citizen participation in environmental matters and make reliable information easily accessible; provide forums and implement processes and procedures as determined by environmental law in order to involve and train communities and the general public on how to take part in environmental decision making.

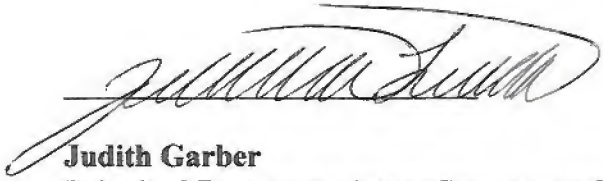
2. Support ANAM thru capacity building in website management, for sections of its website that contains public information such as Environmental Impact Assessment.

E. Benchmarks, Monitoring and Evaluation

Following approval by the Governments of the activities under the Work Program, implementing partners will identify performance indicators and benchmarks to measure progress in furthering the goals and objectives of these activities and to facilitate public reporting of that progress. .

The Governments recognize that a variety of government agencies and civil society groups may be involved in implementing the activities under this Work Program, and that the agency or group that leads implementation for a particular activity will do its utmost to encourage public participation, information disclosure, and performance tracking.

**FOR THE GOVERNEMENT OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, featuring a large, sweeping initial 'J' and a series of connected loops.

Judith Garber
Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
for Oceans and International Environmental
and Scientific Affairs

FOR THE REPUBLIC OF PANAMA

A handwritten signature in black ink, with a prominent initial 'S' and a series of connected loops.

Silvano Vergara Vásquez
Minister of Environment

ANNEX 1: LIST OF AGENCIES / ACRONYMS

United States	Panama
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Agriculture (USDA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ U.S. Forest Service (FS) ○ National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) • Department of Commerce (DOC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) • Department of Energy (DOE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ U.S. National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) • Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) • Department of Homeland Security (DHS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Customs and Border Protection (CBP) ○ U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) • Department of Interior (DOI) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ U.S. National Park Service (NPS) ○ U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) ○ U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS) ○ U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) • Department of Justice (DOJ) • Department of State (DOS) • Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) • National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) • National Invasive Species Council (NISC) • U.S. Trade Development Administration (USTDA) • Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Panama Canal Authority (ACP) • Panama Maritime Authority (AMP) • National Environmental Authority (ANAM) • Panama Aquatic Resources Authority (ARAP) • National Public Services Authority (ASEP) • Panama Tourism Authority (ATP) • Water Center for the Humid Tropics of Latin America and the Caribbean (CATHALAC) • Interagency Commission on the Hydrographic Basin of the Panama Canal (CICH) • National Council for Sustainable Development (CONADES) • RAMSAR Regional Center (CREHO) • Electrical Transmission Company (ETESA) • National Water and Sewer Institute (IDAAN) • Ministry of Education (MEDUCA) • Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF) • Ministry of Trade and Industry (MICI) • Ministry of Agricultural Development (MIDA) • Ministry of Foreign Relations (MINREX) • Ministry of Health (MINSA) • Ministry of Housing (MIVI) • Ministry of Public Works (MOP) • National Secretariat of Science and Technology (SENACYT) • National Civil Protection System (SINAPROC) • Panama Industrial Union (SIP) • Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute